

Mum's World

MY BABY'S HEAD SMELT OF FISH

Her skin was
crusty
and red



As Andrea cradled her daughter Elise, she couldn't escape the terrible odour...

When she was born, my baby Elise had the smoothest, peachiest skin.

But by the time she was seven weeks old, I noticed dry patches on her body. It wasn't a shock — her dad Milton had eczema, as did her big sister Casey, nine at the time.

'Try rubbing in some olive oil,' the health visitor suggested. But it didn't really help.

In less than a month, most of her body was covered in rough, red patches. I tried a selection of

emollient creams, but they made very little difference.

And, as if Elise didn't have enough problems, her little head was now covered in cradle cap.

When I took her out, I couldn't help gazing at other babies her age. They had soft, clear skin.

'And I'd notice their mums' sideways glances into my buggy as they caught sight of my poor daughter.

Elise's face and arms were dry and red. Her scalp was covered in a yellowy crust. It was even in her eyebrows too,

bless her.

She was still beautiful to me, of course. But even I had to admit her appearance was rather scaly.

Poor darling, the itching drove her mad. I dressed her in simple white cotton, put little mitts on her hands to stop her scratching. But she'd wake in the night, squirming and howling in discomfort.

And then there was the other distressing problem...

Elise started to smell. At the age of three months, there was a definite fishy odour about her, like a kipper on the turn. At first I wondered if I was imagining it. But Milton could smell it too.

My twin sister Diane couldn't even bear to hold her.

So I spoke to my health visitor and asked for her advice. 'It's the cradle cap,' she

Me with my
peachy-skinned
newborn Elise



told me. 'It's badly infected.' She suggested I use an antifungal cream on Elise and gradually, the smell improved.

Then I also started to use an emollient cream called Thembra, which I bought from a herbal company near my home.

I'd already used it on Casey. Now I regularly applied it to Elise's head and body.

Over the next couple of months, her skin softened and became a healthy pink. The cradle cap cleared up too, though every so often we'd need to use a steroid ointment for an eczema flare-up.

Elise is one and a half now. We apply Thembra cream to her body day and night.

And these days, nobody can say she's scaly or smelly — just absolutely gorgeous.

**ANDREA WALKER, 37,
FROM HOLMFIRTH,
WEST YORKSHIRE**

ELISE'S SKIN CONDITION

- Eczema, or dermatitis, affects as many as one in five children. Most grow out of it, but it still affects around one in 12 adults.
- Eczema may look unpleasant, but it isn't contagious. Treatment can reduce the inflammation.
- Infantile seborrhoeic eczema (cradle cap) can affect babies in their first year. It can start on the scalp or nappy area, and usually clears up in a few months. Creams and bath oils can help.
- The National Eczema Society advises people to check the ingredients of creams and to do a patch test on a small area of skin first.
- Consult your GP if you are concerned or using a new product.
- For more info about eczema, call the National Eczema Society helpline on 0870 241 3604, or log on to their website at eczema.org.
- To find out more about Thembra, call 01484 685 100, or visit littleherbal.co.uk.